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ABSTRACT

The design of a national service program for youth is discussed. National service can be defined as a program in which all youth, or at least a large fraction, upon reaching some specific age are given the opportunity, and perhaps the obligation, to engage in organized public service--military service, community service, or public works--for a year or two, at relatively low pay. The common characteristic that distinguishes national service from more conventional youth employment programs is that some level of participation (perhaps only registration) would become the norm, if not for all youth, then at least for some large and well-defined subset of youth, such as all 18-year-old males. The key elements in the design of a national service program would involve: defining eligible participants, designating the program as voluntary or compulsory; determining the length of service and compensation for service; and deciding what services participants would perform. An option in a national service program could be job training, since American youth suffers a high unemployment rate relative to the general population. The form of service for which the most support has been generated is work on a variety of community service and public works projects. Small programs of full-time public service funded by ACTION, an independent federal agency devoted to voluntary service, are noted. The experience of the armed forces in shifting from the draft to an all volunteer force is also discussed. (SW)

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Working Paper

NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE
AND HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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DESIGN OF A NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM

The subject of this paper is national youth service -- a topic which has seen something of a renaissance in the last year or so. National service can be defined as a program in which all youth, or at least a large fraction, upon reaching some specific age is given the opportunity, and perhaps the obligation, to engage in organized public service -- military service, community service, or public works -- for a year or two, at relatively low pay. This definition allows for a considerable range of approaches, from universal, mandatory service at one extreme to fairly selective, voluntary service at the other. The common characteristic which distinguishes national service from more conventional youth employment programs is that some level of participation (perhaps only registration) would become the norm, if not for all youth, then at least for some large and well-defined subset of youth such as all eighteen-year-old males.

A great deal has been written about national youth service, but fairly little has been said about how a national service program would be designed and organized, and what would be involved in making it work. It is difficult to judge the merits of national service without having a clear picture of what kind of program is being proposed.

The key elements in the design of a national service program can be expressed by the following questions:

1. How is the class of eligible participants defined?
2. Is the program voluntary or compulsory?
3. What is the length of service?
4. How are participants compensated for their service?
5. What services would participants perform?

Eligibility

The first issue of eligibility is whether the program will be universal or selective: that is, whether all youth, or only some well-defined subset of youth will be eligible to participate. Most of the proponents of national youth service advocate universal eligibility, but there are several plausible ways in which eligibility might be restricted. The most obvious is sex; especially if military service is a large component of the program, eligibility might be limited to males. A second reason for limiting eligibility would be in order to target national service to a subset of all young people which is considered particularly in need of federal assistance. The subset might be those youth who are unemployed, those who are below a threshold family income, or those who are not in school. (Most federal youth employment programs such as those authorized by CETA, are now limited in this way.) A third reason would be to limit the size of the program, because either the level of appropriations or the number of useful jobs that can be created is insufficient to accommodate all those who would apply. Here the choice is whether or not to create an entitlement to a national service job for all youth who are otherwise eligible. Clearly, limiting eligibility in any of these ways would have a substantial effect on the kind of service that participants would experience.

The second issue of eligibility is the question of the age at which a young man or woman enters national service. The usual assumption is that young people would enter national service immediately after graduating from high school (or at age 18 or thereabouts, if not in school). The natural break between high school and college makes this a logical choice for service age.

A third issue is what allowances will be made for deferments and exemptions. There would, of course, be exemptions for those who failed to meet minimum physical and mental standards; these standards could be rigorous enough to exclude a sizeable proportion of those who are otherwise eligible (as is now the practice in the military), or loose enough to permit all but a very small number to participate. In addition, large numbers of young people might be permitted to postpone their national service, or be exempted altogether, if for example they were married, parents, enrolled in higher education, or employed in exempted occupations. (A related issue is what the policy will be towards those who leave national service before completing their term of service. A substantial amount of attrition is unavoidable; to illustrate this point, the average rate of attrition for the first term of military service is now 35%, and in the Job Corps (discussed below) it is over 50%.)

A truly universal program would enroll about four million new participants each year. Limiting eligibility in any of the ways discussed above cuts the size of the program, and cuts its costs: moreover, it changes the nature of the program itself. National service for unemployed males, for example, will be very different, both in the policy goals that it serves, and in the kind of service experience that it produces, from universal service for males and females. Whether and how eligibility is restricted depends largely on what kind of program we are trying to create.

Voluntary or Compulsory

Whether national youth service is voluntary or compulsory -- that is, whether those who are eligible are given the opportunity, or the obligation to participate -- influences not only the size of the program, but also its character.

Many proponents of national service envisage a scheme in which every young man and woman not only is eligible to serve, but actually does serve. For national service to be universal in this sense, it almost certainly has to be compulsory. In general, whatever the eligibility pool, we should assume that unless participation is compulsory, a significant number of eligible persons will choose not to participate. Just how large this number will be is very difficult to predict.

If the program is compulsory, and if eligibility is fairly inclusive, the participants will include a complete cross-section of American youth. If it is voluntary, there will be a tendency for the more advantaged youth -- those who have relatively more attractive alternatives to national service -- to opt out in favor of immediate schooling or employment. Thus the benefits of exposing to each other young people from widely different backgrounds -- benefits which have been attributed to the military draft in the past and which are involved in defense of national service -- are more likely to be realized by a compulsory than by a voluntary national service program.

Finally, the pay levels for national service will vary depending on whether or not participation is compulsory, as discussed below.

Length of Service

Most advocates of national service have proposed a term of service of either one or two years. Length of service has an obvious effect on the size of the program; a two-year program employs twice as many participants in a given year as a one-year program, all other things being equal. There is a second-order effect, in the opposite direction, on the size of a voluntary program: as the length of service is increased, we should expect a diminishing fraction of each age cohort to be willing to participate.

The lower limit for length of service is probably between six months and a year; a participant will probably be unable to receive adequate training and accomplish a reasonable amount at his or her assignment in a period that is shorter. The upper limit for a fairly broad-based program is probably about two years, because the number of young people who are willing to commit themselves to a longer period of service is likely to be small.

Compensation

One argument that has been advanced in favor of national service is that participants could be made to serve at very low pay, making it possible to accomplish useful social ends much more cheaply than would otherwise be possible. Some proponents of national service have suggested that pay should consist only of room, board, and pocket money amounting to twenty dollars or so each week.

The specific argument has been made that using national service to man the enlisted ranks of the armed forces could reduce enlisted manpower expenditures in the military, which now spends \$10 billion annually on basic pay for first-term recruits.

The first point that should be made is that savings of this kind can only be made in a compulsory program. Since the military is now hard-pressed to attract enough recruits, it is difficult to imagine how it would attract the same number of recruits at much lower pay, unless the recruits were compelled to serve. Similarly, large numbers of young people cannot be expected to participate in non-military national service for only nominal compensation unless they are compelled to.

A mandatory national service program could compel young people to serve at very low pay, but the fairness of adding a financial burden to the burden of sacrificing a year or two for service can be questioned. It is for this reason that the Gates Commission, which in 1970 recommended transition to an All Volunteer Force, argued that military pay should be brought up to parity with civilian occupations even if the draft were retained. This suggests that compensation for national service, whether voluntary or compulsory, will have to be on the order of the minimum wage, which is now \$2.65 per hour or about \$5300 per annum. (This is equal to the current base pay for a military enlistee in the first two years of support.) Lower compensation levels will make it difficult to attract participants for a voluntary program, or to gain public support for a compulsory one.

However, compensation could take the form of deferred benefits instead of current pay. In this case the wage paid to participants could be considerably less than the minimum wage -- perhaps ten or twenty dollars each week for pocket money -- with benefits conferred after completion of service providing the major inducement for young people to participate. If the amount of deferred benefits were set

roughly equal to the difference between this pocket money allowance and the minimum wage, the total cost of compensation would remain substantially unchanged.

The idea of deferred benefits for national service was first proposed in 1973. An HEW task force on higher education policy (the second Newman Report) recommended the establishment of a "GI Bill" for community service which would provide postsecondary student aid benefits to young men and women who participated as volunteers in community service programs; the educational benefits would be the only form of compensation that they would receive. More recently, Steven Muller, the president of Johns Hopkins University, proposed a voluntary program of national service in which participants would receive a subsistence wage plus a substantial postsecondary education grant. In Muller's proposal, participation in national service would be the only way that young people could qualify for federal student aid; all other federal student aid programs would be phased out. Both proposals emphasized the value of permitting students to "break out of the academic lockstep," and of offering them an opportunity to broaden their horizons and develop their personal goals before going on to college.

A substantial number of national service participants may not be interested in enrolling in postsecondary education after their term of service. By adding an alternative to educational benefits, such as a federal contribution to mortgage payments of recent participants, the appeal of a national youth service program with deferred compensation could be improved. In either case, benefits could accrue on a monthly basis, or be made conditional on completion of the term of service.

Forms of Service

National service participants would engage in three types of activities: military service, job training, and community service and public works.

The appendix discusses the experience of the armed forces in shifting from the draft -- a limited form of national youth service -- to an all volunteer force. To summarize briefly, there is a broad, but not unanimous consensus that the armed forces are beginning to experience difficulties in meeting their recruitment objectives, and that the quality of recruits is declining. Available data does not clearly support this view, and the military maintains that standards have been maintained since the end of the draft in 1973. However, the demographics of the next decade will put increasing strain on the military's ability to attract enough qualified recruits, and to maintain an enlisted force which is socially and economically representative of the general population.

Part of the support for national service is based on the belief that it would be a better and more reliable source of military enlistments than the all volunteer force. However, the effect of national service on military enlistments would depend on its success in competing for participants, as one of several national service options.

If national service is compulsory, it will almost certainly increase the number of young people who are willing to serve in the armed forces, simply because the military will be able to draw upon a larger pool of potential recruits. To word this differently, since the range of opportunities open to young people will be restricted, military service will be relatively more attractive. The effect of voluntary

national service is more difficult to predict. National service might not attract many more young people than now consider military service. By offering them alternative employment, national service could conceivably make it harder for the armed services to attract recruits.

The duration of national service is likely to be much shorter than the current length of enlistment commitment in the armed forces, which averaged 3.7 years in 1977. If the military is to rely on a national service program as a major source of recruits, one of two steps will have to be taken. Participants can be offered higher pay or some other form of inducement in order to convince a sufficient number to opt for the longer term of military service. Given the difference in length of term and the relative unattractiveness of military service, the inducement would probably have to be quite generous. Or alternatively, the armed forces could adopt a shorter enlistment term. They would then have to attract a larger number of recruits in order to maintain the same effective force level. Switching to a one-year enlistment term would necessitate an increase in annual enlistments for all military services from the current 400,000 to over 2 million; the total first-term enlisted force strength would have to increase from 1 million to 2 million. This would probably require the armed forces to significantly revise the manner in which they use their enlisted men. It would double first-term manpower costs, and quintuple the number of national service participants that would have to be recruited into military service. Therefore the military is likely to resist shortening its term of service.

Despite these difficulties, military service is almost certain to be included as an option in a national service program. Furthermore,

the military has unique experience in attracting, registering and processing, employing, and housing and feeding youth on the massive scale that will be required in a national service program. As an example, consider the formidable task of providing several million medical examinations each year. The military has in place an organization, the Military Enlistment Processing Command, which has the capability to perform this task. Because of its special expertise, the military is likely to play a central role in a national youth service program.

Another option in a national service program could be job training. American youth suffers a high unemployment rate relative to the general population. The unemployment rate for members of the work force aged 16 to 24 years was 14.7% in 1976, compared with an unemployment rate of 5.5% for workers over 24. For many of these individuals, the inability to find work upon entry into the labor market leads to chronic unemployment. Many of the advocates of national service argue that providing disadvantaged youth with work experience early in their careers will give them the skills and attitudes necessary for ensuring subsequent employment.

There is a second reason for including job training as a service option. The pool of participants in any broad-based national service program will include a substantial number of individuals who lack the skills, and in some cases the willingness to perform the tasks required of a military recruit, a member of a public works crew, or a hospital orderly. Unless the program includes a component which is intended primarily to train, rather than to employ youth, it will be difficult for it to accommodate these individuals.

The federal government now spends \$13 billion annually on employment and training programs. Of this total, about \$3 billion is used to train youth under age 22; roughly 2.5 million young people receive job training, vocational rehabilitation, or public service employment.

The first such federal program was the Job Corps, which began in 1965. Today the principle programs in this area are those authorized by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), which provide about two-thirds of the total funding. A new set of programs, authorized by the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977, (YEDPA), is expected to grow to comparable size in the next few years. Both programs are in the Department of Labor.

Some of these programs could be incorporated into a national service program, but not without substantial changes in the way they operate. Only one CETA participant in ten works full time, and the average duration of participation is about six months. Some CETA programs could be altered to fit into a national service program, but others, like CETA summer employment, could not. Even with national service, there will be a need for federal youth employment and training programs for those whose needs are best met by the short-term, part-time pattern of current CETA programs.

Military service and job training are in a sense add-ons to national youth service. The form of service which is at the heart of the notion of national service, and for which the most support has been generated, is work on a variety of community service and public works projects. A Labor Department study on countercyclical public

job creation, released in June of 1978, produced a list of potential public jobs (intended to be exhaustive) which illustrates the broad range of activities that national service participants could engage in. The study was able to make estimates of the number of jobs and the total cost of about half of the 233 activities that were identified. The results of the study are summarized in Table 1.

There has in fact been very little experience in the United States with this kind of public service program since the Civilian Conservation Corps of the nineteen-thirties. Several small programs of full-time public service are funded by ACTION, an independent federal agency devoted to voluntary service. Information on the four programs which most closely resemble national youth service is given in Table 2. In addition, the fiscal year 1979 budget request for ACTION includes \$3.8 million for research on national youth service.

The Youth Community Service (YCS) program, located in and around Syracuse, New York, merits special mention because, unlike other ACTION programs, it is designed as a demonstration project to test the concept of national youth service. It is nominally open to all youth between the ages of 16 and 21, regardless of family income or background. A local board in Syracuse arranges community service projects for participants, who then receive both a stipend to cover living expenses and deferred educational benefits.

YCS was preceded by a similar pilot project in the Seattle, Washington area. The Program for Local Service (PLS) was funded by ACTION from 1973 to 1976, when the change in administration resulted in funds being cut off.

TABLE 1

Job Creation Potential and Costs

<u>Program Area</u>	<u>Estimated Number of Jobs (thousands)</u>	<u>Total Cost (\$ billion)</u>
Community development	62	0.6
Criminal justice	235	2.5
Libraries and museums	50	0.4
Education	1,224	13.2
Energy	39	0.6
Environment	172	1.7
Government and staffing	78	0.6
Fire prevention	11	0.1
Nutrition	N/A	N/A
Health care	42	0.3
Housing	120	2.8
Local government	449	18.4
Parks and recreation	47	0.4
Private sector	7	0.1
Social security	467	4.6
Transportation	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Total	<u>3,003</u>	<u>46.3</u>

TABLE 2

Principal ACTION Programs for YouthFiscal Year 1978

<u>Program</u>	<u>Number of Volunteers</u>	<u>% of Volunteers Aged 18-24</u>	<u>Expenditures (\$ millions)</u>	<u>Compensation</u>
Peace Corps	6,880	50%	80	living expenses and \$125 per month separation pay
Volunteers in Service to American (VISTA)	4,695	39	27	living expenses and \$125 per month
University Year for ACTION	1,270	63	5	living expenses
Youth Community Service	400	100	8	\$4,056 per year and \$33 per month in educational benefits

The Seattle project was judged to be a successful test of national youth service. The value of the work performed by PLS participants was judged by their sponsors to exceed the cost of the program. Sixty-two percent of the participants completed the full year of service, and most of them reported that the experience had been valuable for subsequent employment. The program had expanded to cover most of Washington state when funds were cut off.

The Syracuse project is only now starting up, funded by an \$8 million grant to ACTION from the Labor Department's YEDPA program. Because of the funding source, YCS is expected to be more heavily targeted at disadvantaged youth, and therefore, to be a less perfect test of universal or broad-based national service.

It should be stressed that ACTION's programs are quite small, and that the Peace Corps and VISTA in particular have attracted a disproportionate number of upper-income, college-educated, public service-oriented volunteers. It is not clear whether ACTION's programs can be successfully duplicated at the massive scale of a full national service program.

Cost

The cost of a national service program depends on the size of the eligible pool, the length of service, whether or not the program is compulsory, what levels of compensation are chosen, and what kinds of service options are included. This last point merits some elaboration.

Service as a hospital orderly or a teacher's assistant is likely to take place within the participant's home community. Therefore no costs are incurred for transporting, housing, or feeding the participant. In contrast, service on a public works crew working on

reforestation of woodlands or flood control, is likely to take place at a location distant from the participant's home, and so will incur these costs. Furthermore, most forms of community service will involve little or no capital investment, and little need to hire supervisors, since participants will be working in pre-existing institutions. For traditional public works projects, these costs could be quite high.

The total cost of national service will vary tremendously, depending on the precise details of its design. The following estimates are for illustrative purposes only.

The annual salary cost of paying the minimum wage to one national service participant is \$5,300. As a very rough guess, the additional expenditures for training, transportation, living expenses, supervisors, and necessary capital might come to another \$4,000-\$5,000. (Non-salary expenditures for VISTA average \$4,200 per participant.) Thus supporting one participant for one year should cost on the order of \$10,000.

Administrative and other costs might add another \$5 billion.

A one-year mandatory program for men and women, with 3.5 million participants, would therefore cost about \$40 billion. This figure would be offset by reductions in military manpower expenditures and job training expenditures: \$10 billion in first-term enlisted pay, and \$3 billion in CETA and related expenditures on youth. The net budget cost of national service would be \$27 billion -- a figure which matches fairly closely net budget cost estimates made by the Congressional Budget Office and by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, Reserve Affairs, and Logistics, of \$24 billion (for 3.5 million participants) and \$25 billion (for 4 million participants), respectively.

An additional offset would result if participants received a portion of their compensation in deferred educational benefits, since these benefits would replace existing Office of Education grants. Net budget expenditures would also be partially offset by the increase in tax revenues that would result from higher youth employment. These offsets would total somewhere between \$1 and \$5 billion annually.

Clearly, national youth service would be a very ambitious, and a very expensive venture. A voluntary, selective program could cost as little as \$10 billion or so, while a two-year mandatory, universal program could cost as much as \$70 to \$80 billion. The scale of the enterprise can be illustrated by considering one very small piece of it: the task of registering potential participants. Registration would require an organization very similar to the Selective Service of the military draft, which at its peak had 2,500 employees and a budget of \$100 million. This by itself is a sizeable program, even by federal standards.

Administration

It is not the purpose of this paper to analyze the administration of a national youth service program in detail. The following paragraphs are meant only to raise some broad issues of design that are not discussed elsewhere.

The pilot national service program funded by ACTION (YCS) is administered at the local level; local agencies are responsible for selecting participants and assigning them to service positions, with the federal government involved only in funding. National service could be organized similarly; indeed many of its advocates favor this

approach. If the federal government chose instead to exercise more control over the selection of participants and of the types of activities they would engage in, the program could be administered by a federal agency designated for that purpose. This paper has assumed that the latter approach, closer to the military than to YCS or CETA in organizational design, would be adopted.

All administrative functions related to national service -- registration, induction, training, placement, and funding -- could be put in a single agency, which would then "operate" the entire program. Alternatively, a much smaller agency could perform the functions of registration, induction, and perhaps training, and then serve as a clearinghouse for service programs operated independently by the Departments of Defense; Labor; and Health, Education, and Welfare; and ACTION.

An interesting and radical option would be to institute a one-year program of national service administered by the Department of Defense. All participants (perhaps excluding females, or including them only on a voluntary basis) would be required to go through some form of military basic training. They would then serve in the military for the remainder of the year: two million in conventional military service, and the rest in service options operated by other agencies for the military.

CONCLUSION

The preceding section has outlined the purposes of national youth service, and the elements of its design. Two questions remain: is national service feasible? and how do we judge its results?

Feasibility

Could productive work be found for all young men and women who would participate in national service? For any one-year program, the answer is clearly yes. The army could provide 2 million positions, community service and public works could provide at least another 3 million (recall that the figures given in the Labor Department study, cited above, covered only half of the service activities that were identified), and job training could absorb as many as a million more. This is well in excess of the maximum of 4 million participants in a one-year program, and is likely to exceed the number of participants in a two-year voluntary program. However, it might fall short of the requirements of a two-year program that is both universal and compulsory. And it must be remembered that while it may be possible to identify 6 million productive positions, setting up the institutions to support the positions is likely to be a slow process. Any very large national service program will probably have to be phased in over a period of many years.

The first step would probably be to institute a small voluntary program, with options for military service or participation in existing CETA and ACTION programs. Compensation, including deferred benefits, would be set fairly high initially to attract participants with a substantial differential between military and non-military service.

Compensation could be reduced in subsequent years, when national service was well established, by holding compensation increases below inflation.

The size of the budget outlays necessary to pay for national service will be a formidable obstacle to implementing it. In a previous section, the total budget cost of a one-year compulsory program was estimated at \$40 billion; this is equal to the combined budgets of the Departments of Agriculture, Energy, and Transportation in the current fiscal year.

Another obstacle is public acceptance of the notion of national service. According to the results of two Gallup polls, the results of which are given in Table 3, nearly half of all teenagers and a majority of adults now favor compulsory service for young men, but not for young women.

A final obstacle applies only to compulsory programs: it is arguable that the federal government lacks the power to draft its citizens into public service, except where it is necessary to meet military needs. Some believe that a constitutional amendment would probably be required to grant this authority.

Judging the Value of National Service

A question which is more difficult to answer than whether enough positions could be made available, is whether the work performed by the participants would be worth the cost, taking into account the value of the experience to the participants themselves. The larger the program, the more likely it is that marginal participants would be wasting both public resources and their own efforts.

TABLE 3

Attitudes of Teenagers and Adults Towards
Compulsory National Service

	Respondents					
	Teenagers			Adults		
	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
Would you favor or oppose requiring all young men to give one year of service to the military forces, or in non-military work here or abroad, such as VISTA or the Peace Corps?	47%	46%	7%	62%	33%	5%
Would you favor or oppose requiring all young women to give one year of service to the military forces, or in non-military work here or abroad, such as VISTA or the Peace Corps?	38%	55%	7%	40%	51%	9%

These questions were asked in two national Gallup polls, released in January and August of 1977.

In principle, a workforce of several million young people, contributing one or two years of their lives to public service, could contribute a tremendous amount to American society. In practice, one has to ask whether this potential is likely to be realized. The body of people administering and supervising a national service program would constitute a large bureaucracy, and bureaucracies are not always entirely effective at achieving their social goals. Perhaps it is realistic to assume that a federal national service program would function about as effectively as the public school system, and to evaluate its merits in that light.

It is not clear what effect national service would have on higher education enrollments. A policy of deferred student aid benefits for participants, if it were fairly generous, could increase enrollments substantially. However, if all other federal student aid programs were ended and a "GI Bill" for national service became the only federal student aid program, the effect could be to depress enrollments.

Phasing in national service too quickly would create a serious short-term drought of college students, but this problem can easily be avoided. The long-term effect on enrollments of inserting a year or two of public service between high school and college is uncertain. After a period away from school, many young people who would otherwise have proceeded on to college might decide that national service had provided them with employment skills, and that further education was unnecessary. It seems equally likely that, as its proponents claim, national service would give its participants an opportunity to develop their career plans, and to recognize the value of higher education. In either case, the impact on enrollments is likely to be greatest for community colleges, given their vocational nature.

Finally, one must ask what broad-based national service can accomplish that cannot already be accomplished with existing programs. Why is it necessary to press everyone into public service, or to make service a norm for American youth? Perhaps a more appropriate policy would be to create an umbrella organization which would provide registration and referral functions for CETA, a somewhat larger ACTION, and perhaps a reactivated military draft. This would not constitute a national service program, as that term was defined in the opening pages of this paper.

National service can be justified, in part, as a way of sharing the burden of service to society more equally among its members. According to this view, it is unfair to place the entire burden of military service on a subset of American youth, regardless of how that subset is selected, while the majority enjoys the fruits of society without being required to make an equal contribution. If it is unavoidable that some must serve, then it can be argued that all should serve.

However, modifying the pattern of military service, without adding the other service options which characterize national service, could satisfy this standard of fairness. Acceptance of the desirability of national youth service ultimately depends on attitudes towards the fundamental notion of public service. Those who believe strongly that every citizen has an obligation to serve his country, and that the willingness to make personal sacrifices for the social good is a virtue that the government should actively promote, are likely to look favorably on compulsory national service. Those who instead believe that public service should be the option of the individual, to be exercised or not as he or she sees fit, will fail to perceive sufficient benefits to outweigh the costs and obstacles to the more broad-based forms of national service.

APPENDIX

The All Volunteer Force

Military conscription, or the draft, is a form of national youth service; it is the only form that has been used thus far in the United States. The draft was suspended in 1973, following a lengthy debate on the merits of volunteer versus conscripted service: a debate brought on, in large part, by the pressures of the Vietnam war. Since 1973, we have relied entirely on volunteers to man the nation's armed forces.

The number of first-time entrants into active military service decreased only slightly with the end of the draft, and has remained nearly constant at 400 thousand enlistments annually since then -- within one or two percent of the recruitment objectives of the military. Nevertheless there is growing concern, both within and outside the military, over the ability of the All Volunteer Force (AVF) to attract a sufficient number of recruits, and to maintain adequate standards for the quality of recruits over the next ten or twenty years. It is not at all clear, however, how serious the problem will be.

There is a broad, but far from unanimous, consensus that the quality of military enlistments has been declining in recent years. The concern is not that enlisted personnel lack the intelligence or the education to perform their duties; neither the military itself nor outside analysts see a problem here. However, less qualified recruits -- those with lower levels of educational attainment or mental aptitude -- have markedly higher rates of attrition than those who are better qualified. Thus it is feared that as the overall quality of enlistments declines, the overall rate of attrition will rise. This would necessitate an increase in the

annual number of enlistments in order to achieve the same final force strength, and therefore larger expenditures on recruiting, training, and first-term pay.

The military relies on two measures of the quality of recruits: graduation from high school, and performance on mental aptitude tests which are used to divide applicants into five "mental categories." Both measures are strongly correlated with attrition rates during the first term of service, as shown in table 4.

TABLE 4

Attrition During the First Two Years of Service
as a Function of Graduation from High School
and Mental Category, for FY 1975 Recruits

	Mental Category				Total
	<u>I and II</u>	<u>III A</u>	<u>III B</u>	<u>IV</u>	
	<u>Percentile 65-100</u>	<u>50-64</u>	<u>31-49</u>	<u>10-30</u>	
High School Graduates	18 %	22 %	25 %	28 %	21 %
Non High School Graduates	39	42	47	48	44

(Mental Category V applicants - those below the tenth percentile - are ineligible for service.)

In order to minimize first term attrition and the disciplinary problems that cause attrition, the armed forces attempt to draw a large percentage of recruits from the upper mental categories, and to enlist as many high school graduates as possible. At present, slightly more than two thirds of all recruits are high school graduates. This percentage has changed fairly little over the past fifteen years, although the figure for Army recruits has declined while the figures for the other services has increased.

TABLE 5

Percentage of First Term Recruits Who
are High School Graduates

<u>Service</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>					
	<u>1964</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>
Army	67%	67%	50%	58%	59%	59%
Navy	58	74	62	71	76	73
Marine Corps	61	42	50	53	62	70
Air Force	84	87	85	85	89	88
Total DOD	68	69	58	65	69	69

Over the same period, the number of recruits from the highest mental categories has held roughly constant, while the number of recruits from the lowest category has declined.

TABLE 6

Percentage Distribution of First Term Recruits
by Mental Category - All Services

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Mental Category</u>		
	<u>I and II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>
1964	38%	47%	15%
1971	35	43	22
1973	34	52	14
1975	38	56	6
1977	35	60	5

Once again, however, the Army has fared relatively worse than the other services, with declines in the percentage of recruits from both the highest and the lowest mental categories. Whether this means that the overall quality of Army recruits has improved or declined is a matter of interpretation.

There is no clear evidence here to support the view that the quality of recruits to the Armed Forces is now declining. However, the number of eighteen-year-olds in the population, and therefore the size of the recruiting pool, is now at a peak. This number will decline steadily for the next dozen years, falling below 80 percent of the current level by the early 1990s. These figures have led several analysts to predict declines of at least 15 percent in the supply of better qualified volunteers (upper mental category high school graduates) by 1990, and a recent

Congressional Budget Office study predicted that the supply of better qualified volunteers would fall 36 percent short of recruitment objectives by 1985.

Finally, there is an element in the quality of military recruits that numbers cannot fully capture, and that is the value of drawing recruits from a wide spectrum of American society. In the course of the debate that preceded the end of the draft, the fear was expressed that an all-volunteer Army would become a professional, or even a mercenary Army, unrepresentative of the larger society and less subject to civilian control.

The experience of the first five years of the All Volunteer Force does not appear to have borne out these fears. In a recent study of the All Volunteer Force, Richard Cooper found little or no change in the socioeconomic mix of recruits. There has been an increase in the percentage of recruits who are black, but this appears to be independent of the decision to shift from a conscripted to a volunteer force.

Still, although the educational, racial, and socioeconomic characteristics of recruits have not changed substantially in recent years, they do not now, nor did they in the recent past, match the characteristics of the general population from which recruits are drawn. The study by Richard Cooper, which was cited above, gives the following figures.

TABLE 7

Comparison of AVF Recruits and
All Young American Males

	<u>AVF Recruits</u>	<u>Male U.S. Population</u>	<u>Age</u>
Percent who are High School Graduates	65%	75%	18-22
Percent with some College	6%	34%	18-22
Percent Black	16%	12%	18-21
Mental Category I (top 7%)	3%	7%	18-21
Percent with Family Income greater than \$14,700 (top 10 percent)	8%	14%	16-21

The military has become the employer of last resort for many young people, especially blacks and the poor, while the more advantaged youth have been able to avoid military service. There is a strong argument that the burden of military service should be shared equally by all members of society regardless of their social and economic status. The All Volunteer Force is far from achieving this goal.